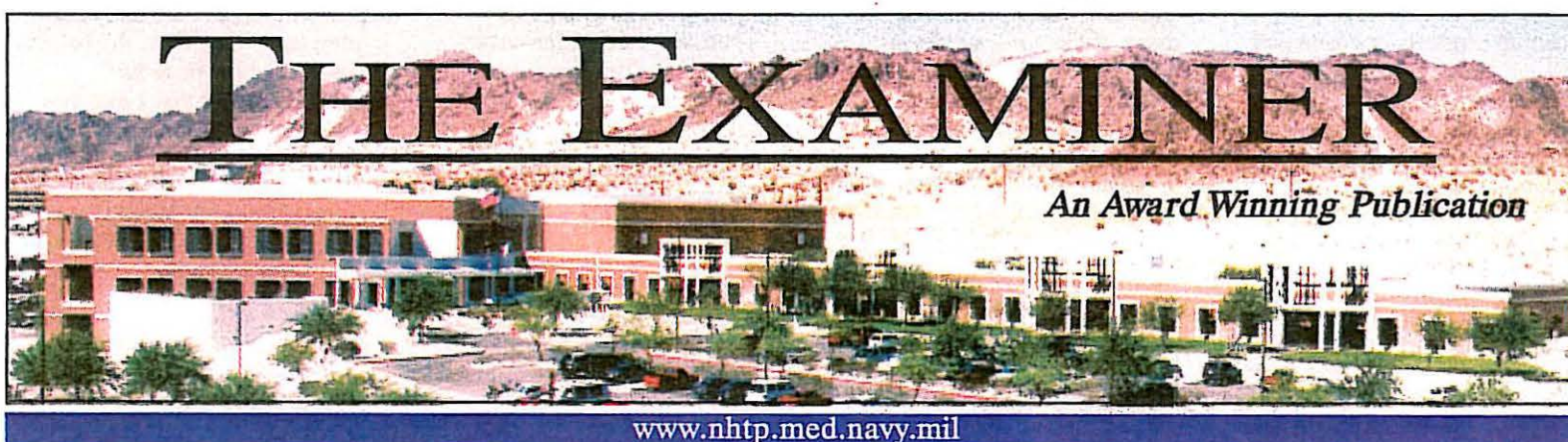
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www.nhtp.med.navy.mil

DoD Launches New Video to Aid Service
Members and Families in Seeking Help

In honor of Mental Health Month last month, the Department of Defense (DoD) is launching a new educational video depicting how service members and their families may be affected by combat and deployment stress.

A Different Kind of Courage: Safeguarding and Enhancing Your Psychological Health, features interviews with military mental health experts and chaplains, as well as personal stories by service and family members.

The video explores issues of concern such as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), alcohol abuse, nightmares, hypervigilance, exposure to violence, emotional numbness, and difficulties faced when a loved one is deployed.

The video is a new component of the Mental Health Self-Assessment Program (MHSAP), a DoD funded initiative that offers service personnel and their families the opportunity to take anonymous mental health and alcohol self-assessments online, via telephone, and at special events held at installations worldwide. The program is designed to help individuals identify their own symptoms and access assistance before a problem becomes serious. The self-assessments are available 24/7 online or via the telephone at www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org and 1-877-877-3647.

Since the program was launched in 2006, more than 80,000 screenings have been completed online and over the phone.

Through the use of real stories and dramatized vignettes, A Different Kind of Courage addresses the symptoms of mental health and alcohol disorders among military service members and families, and the importance of early help-seeking to protect one's career, family and health. It also provides useful information on how to convince a family member or friend to seek help.

In a segment of the video, Air Force CMSgt Manny Sarmina, Senior Enlisted Advisor in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), emphasizes the importance of having

Continued on page 7

Local Sailor in Continuing Promise...



ESCUELA DE SANTA ISABELLA, Guatemala (May 10, 2008)
Hospital Corpsman Michael Hagglund, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4), examines a woman's eye during a humanitarian civic assistance event supporting Continuing Promise (CP) 2008. Boxer is deployed supporting the Pacific phase of CP, an equal partnership mission between the United States, Guatemala, El Salvador and Peru. When not off on deployment Hagglund works at the Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms Optometry Department.
U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Matthew Jackson (Released)

Inside...

Asthma control is one of the conditions that Navy Medicine uses to base our hospital budget. **page 2**

No one is immune to the effects of deployments. However, deployment may increase the intensity of the experience for you, your spouse or child, resulting in some form of behavioral health issues. **page 3**

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You're approaching 65 and you have to make some decisions about your family's health care coverage. **page 6**

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So Why Do I Need to Keep My or My Child's Asthma Under Control?

By Martha Hunt, M.A.
Health Promotions Coordinator
Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital

Asthma control is one of the conditions that Navy Medicine uses to base our hospital budget.

Remember that we talked about our budget last month in the Examiner?

When asthma or diabetes is out of control or when people are not accessing the annual health care screenings that they need, the Navy cuts our budget as they assume that we (the hospital) are not doing our job to help you (the patient) lead healthier lives. When our budget is cut, it affects all of our patients as a whole as to the services and staff that we have available to you. So when you or your child's asthma is out of control, not only does it effect your health and the quality of your life, but it effects the health care delivered by this hospital as a whole through budget cuts.

What is asthma and why can't I breathe? Asthma is a lung disease where the small air passages in your lungs, the bronchioles, become inflamed and close down or spasm. When this hap-

pens, you cough, wheeze, are short of breath, and have tightness in your chest.

Asthma attacks are usually triggered by allergies, but can also be triggered by:

- * infections like a cold or flu,
- * emotional stress or excitement,
- * vigorous exercise,
- * cold air,
- * occupational dusts and chemical vapors,
- * air pollution such as cigarette smoke or car exhaust,
- * household chemicals like cleaning products or cosmetics, or
- * medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen and some heart medications.

What is an allergy? An allergy is when the body 'over-reacts' to something in your environment that is normally harmless. For example, common substances that cause allergic reactions include pollen, dust mites, mold, roaches, fish and shellfish, peanuts, latex and some medications. Signs of an allergic reaction can include not only asthma attacks but congestion, runny nose, watery eyes, sneezing, hives and coughing.

If you are severely allergic to an allergen, and the body

responds in full force against it, you can experience what is called 'anaphylactic shock.' This is when your lungs and throat spasm and swell shut, cutting off all of your breathing. You can die from anaphylactic shock if you do not seek immediate treatment.

What is the best way to handle asthma and allergies? Avoidance and treatment! Spring starts early here in the desert and many of the plants that you may be allergic too have already exploded with pollen. Also many of the wind storms we have been having make your asthma worse by bringing all sorts of debris up off the desert floor and into the air you breathe.

If you have allergies, do your best to avoid the substances that

make you react. Keep your home as dust free as possible, avoid pet dander, and stay away from pollutants such as cigarette smoke, and cleaning chemicals. Use mechanical filtration systems such as room filters and air conditioners to remove pollen and dust from the air. In the winter, continue to use room filters and maintain your furnace with HEPA filters when possible. A few extra dollars spent on HEPA furnace filters each year can make a world of difference in your breathing ability.

There are medications available that can help your body defend itself from both asthma attacks and from allergic reactions. Your physician can evaluate you, perform tests and determine which of these medications are best for you. Also,

make sure you tell your doctor what medications you are already taking including supplements and over the counter drugs since they can interfere with the asthma and allergy medications.

Watch for symptoms that you are going to have an allergic reaction or an asthma attack. Early response to the symptoms can reduce the severity of the attacks and keep you out of the emergency room or the hospital.

Learn to be active in the management of your asthma and allergies. Remember, the better you manage your asthma symptoms, the fewer visits that you will need to the emergency room, the higher quality of life you will have and the larger the budget here at the Naval Hospital.

Prevent diabetes problems...

Keep your Diabetes Under Control

By Martha Hunt, MA
Health Promotion Coordinator
Robert e. Bush Naval Hospital

Last month in the Examiner, we learned about the relationship between patient care and hospital funding. When we as patients don't follow our provider's recommendations, Navy Medicine cuts the funding here at the hospital. The cuts in hospital funding then impact all patients by cutting what services are offered at this hospital. One of the areas that Navy Medicine looks at to determine our funding is "how many of our diabetes patients have their diabetes under control?" This month's Examiner article explains why you need to keep your diabetes under control. It isn't just about hospital funding, but it is about your quality of life and your overall health status.

Diabetes takes, on average, eight years off your life due to the adverse effects of out of control blood sugar on your body. High levels of blood sugar, can damage many parts of the body, such as the heart, blood vessels, eyes, and kidneys. Heart and blood vessel disease can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Also, if you drink alcohol or smoke, then the health risks can be magnified even more.

Talk to your provider about what your blood sugar levels should be and make sure you keep a written record of your levels to show your provider when you see them. Blood sugar levels before a meal should be 90 to 130. Also talk to your provider regarding the number of times per day you should be checking your blood sugar levels using a blood glucose meter. If you aren't sure how to use your glucose meter,

Continued on page 7

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The Examiner welcomes your comments and suggestions concerning the publication. Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month for the following month's edition. Any format is welcome, however, the preferred method of submission is by e-mail or by computer disk.

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Five Misconceptions about Behavioral Health

By Kristen Ward
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

No one is immune to the effects of deployments. However, deployment may increase the intensity of the experience for you, your spouse or child, resulting in some form of behavioral health issues.

These issues can range from anxiety, depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress dis-

order (PTSD), substance abuse and may even lead to thoughts of suicide.

Common Misconceptions

With Last Month being "Mental Health Awareness Month," it is the perfect time to learn the truth about some of common behavioral health myths.

Myth: Behavioral health issues only affect a small population of certain groups.

Fact: Approximately one in five adults struggle with a behavioral health disorder of varying degrees, making this more common than cancer, heart and lung disease combined. One in four families will be effected, whether it is the children, the adults or a combination of both who are suffering. Behavioral health issues do not discriminate - problems can impact anyone regardless of ethnicity, age or sex.

Myth: I don't have a behavioral health problem, I just need something to help me relax.

Fact: Often, people self-medicate with drugs or alcohol. Since alcohol is a depressant, it can lead to an increase in behavioral health symptoms and addiction problems. Feeling a 'high' while on alcohol or drugs is temporary and when it's over, it can lead to more cravings, increased depression or other symptoms.

Myth: My TRICARE benefits won't cover behavioral health care.

Fact: TRICARE covers mental and behavioral health care that is medically or psychologically necessary. Arrange a screening with your primary care manager (PCM), who can then help you decide whether to seek additional treatments if symptoms are found. If you do pursue treatment, TRICARE covers up to eight behavioral

health visits with a network provider without an authorization.

Active duty Service members (ADSM) must receive a referral from their PCM or military treatment facility (MTF) in order to seek treatment outside of the MTF. Active duty family members (ADFM) do not need preauthorization for the first eight therapy visits with a network provider. For treatment beyond the initial eight therapy visits, beneficiaries are required to receive authorization.

For more on your benefits, visit the "Beneficiary Services" page on www.triwest.com, select "Handbooks and Brochures" and "Behavioral Health Care Benefits" or call 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-284-3743). You can also Visit the "Mental Health and Behavior" section at www.tricare.mil for specific coverage and associated costs.

Myth: Behavioral health disorders are untreatable.

Fact: The majority of people with behavioral health disorders improve when they receive appropriate treatment. Types of treatment depend on your diagnosis, severity of symptoms and preference. A variety of treatments, including medications and short-term psychotherapies, have proven effective. Once you or your loved one is feeling better, treatment may need to be

continued for several months... and in some cases, indefinitely ...to prevent a relapse.

Myth: Seeing a provider is my only option for help.

Fact: Several options are available for assistance in learning and dealing with behavioral health related issues. These include:

"Help From Home" video series features military families who have faced the challenges of deployment and reintegration. This and other tools are available on the Behavioral Health portal of www.triwest.com.

TriWest also provides a 24/7 telephone access and crisis intervention services. Service members and their families in the TRICARE 21-state West Region can request assistance with a mental health crisis or with simple requests for behavioral health information by calling (866) 284-3743.

MilitaryOneSource.com has articles, booklets, audio CDs and other interactive tools to help you learn more about behavioral health issues.

Final Truth

If you still have questions about behavioral health, such as signs and symptoms, contact your health care provider for the real story, and to find the help needed when stress or depression, or emotional challenges that come with life are not resolving over time.

Children's Deployment Stress May Mirror Their Parent's

By Kristen Ward
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

While Service members face challenges on the battlefield, continued deployments also can be demanding for families at home. Children waiting for a parent to come back home are often vulnerable to stress, depression and anxiety.

Homecoming is a joyous time for the entire family. But when a parent returns, children are also susceptible to feelings of depression, especially if the mom or dad exhibits symptoms of combat stress or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A child whose parent has PTSD will often mimic the symptoms, experts say.

Think Your Child is Depressed?

Depression is more than just feeling sad. Symptoms can be behavioral changes such as: disinterest in friends or hobbies once enjoyed; difficulty concentrating; irritable moods the majority of the day, every day; and feeling worthless, helpless or guilty.

Children may exhibit physical symptoms, like stomachaches or headaches; have difficulty sleeping or sleep too much; and may have significant weight loss or gain.

What to do First

If your child displays any of the symptoms mentioned above for at least two weeks, contact your child's doctor or primary care manager (PCM) for an appointment. The PCM can help you decide if you should pursue behavioral health care.

If the PCM recommends additional care, know that your TRICARE benefits offer the first eight visits with a behavioral health provider without an authorization. TriWest has offered training to many of its civilian providers to help them understand the unique challenges that

Continued on page 7

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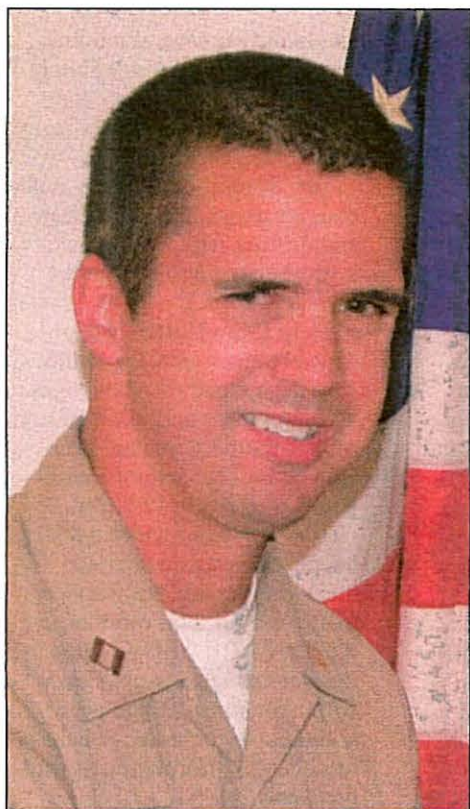
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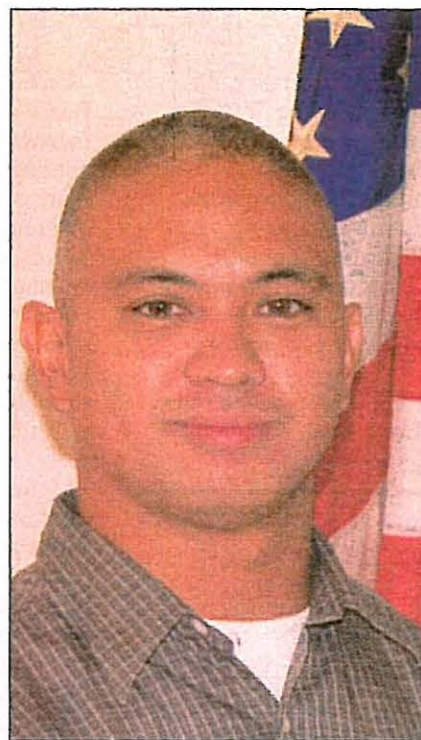
Super Stars...



Lt. Paul Harris, Physical Therapy Department, receives a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal.



Lt. Cmdr. Frances Slonski, Surgical Suite, is selected as the Officer of the Quarter.



James Castro, Primary Care Clinic, is selected as the Junior Civilian of the Quarter.



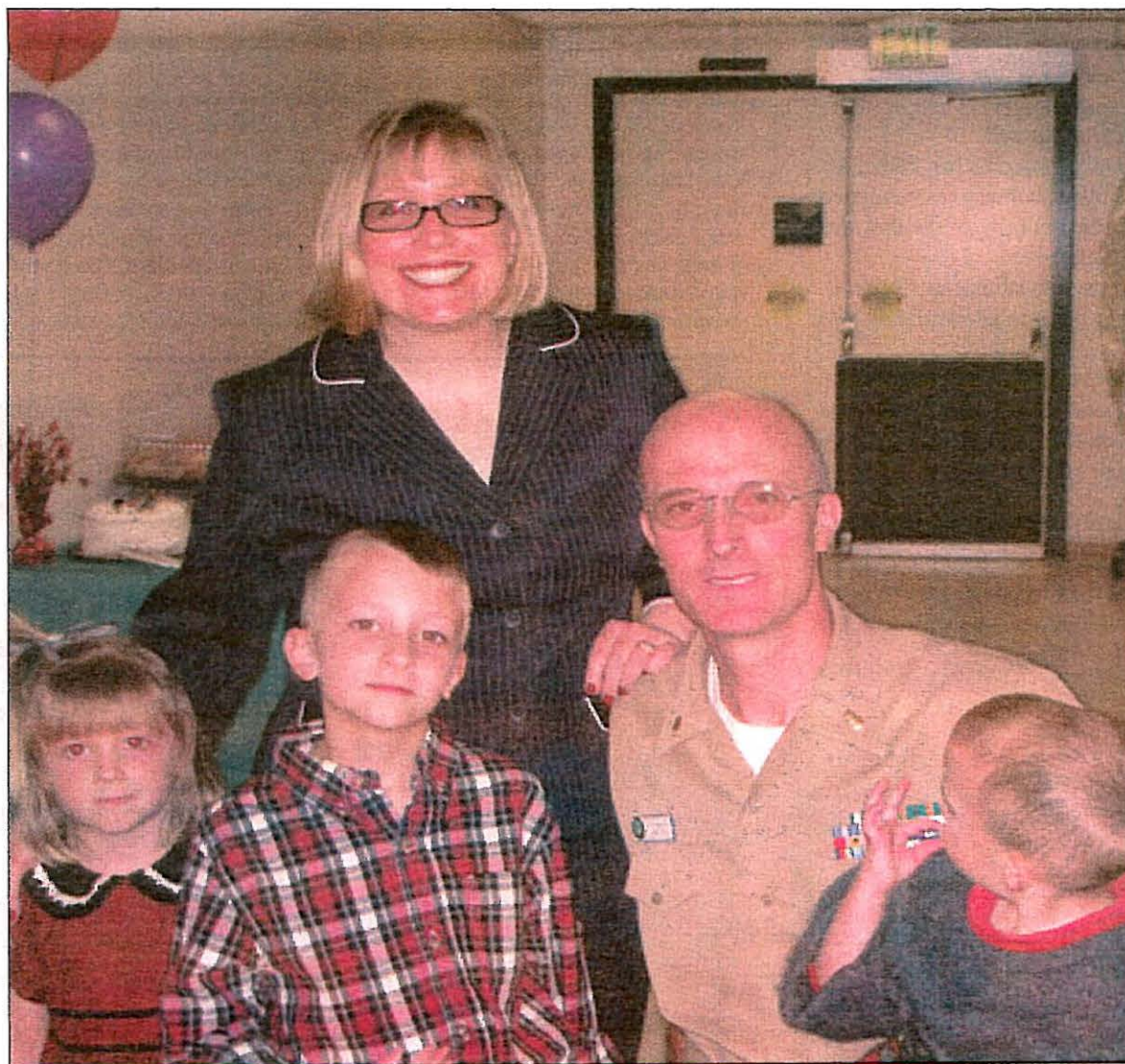
Kelly Von Poppen, Patient Administration, is selected as the Senior Civilian of the Quarter.



HM3 Sarilyn Ogumoro, above, of the hospital's Surgical Suite, and HM2 Daniel Magee, below, of the hospital's Preventive Medicine Department receive the 3-6-9 Certificate.



Dan Barber, Public Affairs Officer, receives a 35 year Federal Length of Service Award.



Lt. Cmdr. Mark Anderson, MOR/SPD Division Officer, left, with his wife Chrystelle, and children from left to right, Cynthia, Brandon and Hayden, celebrate his recent promotion to his current rank.

How to Lose Weight Before It's Too Late

By Shari Lopatin
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

It's no secret American society struggles with obesity, more so than many other countries.

As a matter of fact, the National Institute of Health reported about two-thirds of U.S. adults older than 20 are overweight or obese. That's 66 percent of 133.6 million people.

Additionally, the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that obesity prevalence in the United States has doubled among adults between 1980 and 2004.

Obesity isn't just a weight problem. It also increases the risk of other health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. Not all weight-related risks start with genetics. Among the most prominent factors are lifestyle habits, and some adults who are overweight weren't always struggling with unwanted heaviness.

For most people, starting healthy living habits early on is one of the best ways to keep from becoming obese. Already facing a weight-related problem? It's never too late to begin making some changes.

Facing surgery

However, if new life choices don't do the trick, TRICARE added laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding -- otherwise known as lap band -- as a proven medical technology. Under TRICARE, retroactive to Feb 1, 2007, lap band is covered for individuals that meet certain TRICARE criteria associated with weight-related high morbidity conditions. The TRI-CARE policy manual defines morbid obesity as body weight more than 100 pounds heavier than ideal weight for one's height and bone structure, or body weight twice one's ideal weight.

In addition, this weight is in association with severe medical conditions known to have higher mortality rates. Anyone considering lap band should talk to his or her primary care manager first about all other options.

Preauthorization is required by TRICARE for lap band procedures.

What is lap band?

If surgery does become the only choice, the American Medical Association's (AMA) web site defines lap band as restrictive bariatric surgery, meaning it will limit the amount of food the stomach can hold and therefore slow the rate of food passage. Unlike previous devices, the lap band's diameter is adjustable by a connection to a reservoir implanted under the skin. Doctors will inject or remove saline from the reservoir to change the size of the gastric opening.

Staying healthy

Of course, surgery isn't ideal, but rather just one option. Therefore, learn about making healthy choices. For example, the word 'diet' encompasses everything a person eats, not just a specific plan to lose weight. Diet isn't just about what goes in, but how much goes in. Proper portioning is very important to healthy eating and shedding those pounds.

Here are some other healthy living tips (and remember to always check with the doctor before making any drastic changes):

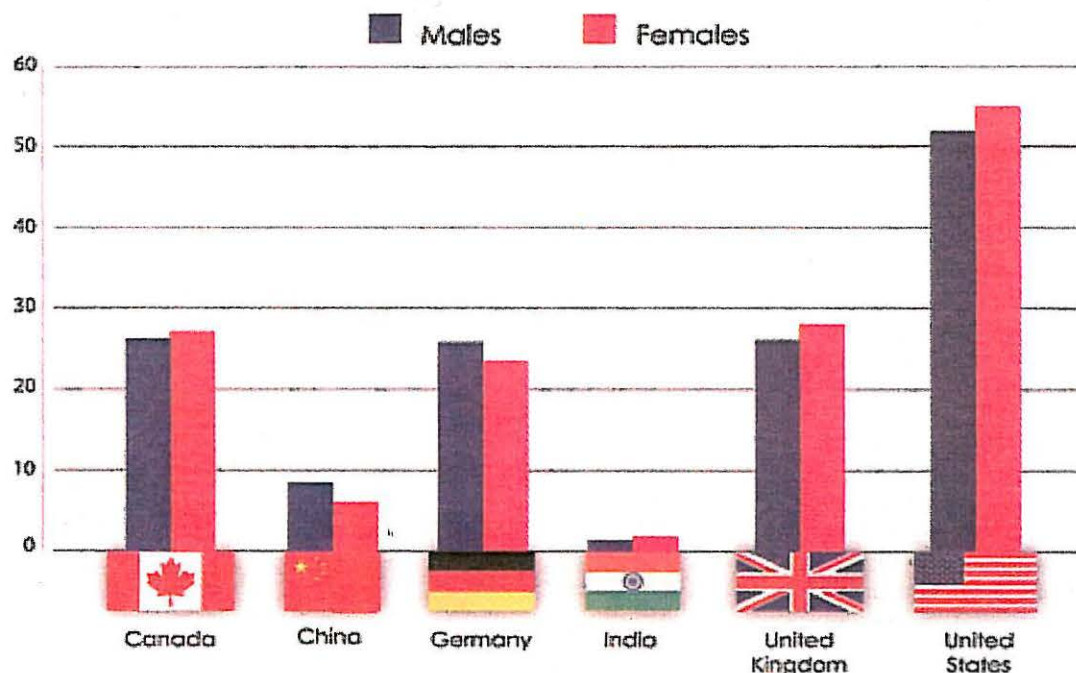
- * Work that body. Exercise, exercise, and exercise. Don't overdo it of course -- but the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends fitting in 30 to 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.

- * Visit the pyramid. The food pyramid, that is. The USDA updated the Food Pyramid to the new MyPyramid a few years ago to include grains, vegetables, fruits, oils, meat and beans, and milk. Check it out at www.mypyramid.gov.

- * Stay natural. Basically, cut out the fast food runs, the binge drinking, and the frozen meals every night. Concentrate on whole, more natural produce foods, such as whole grain breads, lean meats, and fresh fruits and veggies.

- * Know the doc. In a time like this, a primary care manager can be a man or woman's best friend. A doctor will know his

Adult Obesity Rates by Country Estimates for 2015



Source: World Health Organization

or her patient's situation and how to form an individualized healthy living plan. In addition, consulting with a registered dietician to help form that plan

can be extremely helpful.

Healthy living isn't just about actions, it's about outlook. For more information on exercise and healthy living habits, visit

TriWest Healthcare Alliance's Healthy Living Portal under the 'beneficiary' section of www.triwest.com.

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TRICARE for Life...

What You Need to Know

By Shari Lopatin
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

You're approaching 65 and you have to make some decisions about your family's health care coverage.

When it comes to health care, you shouldn't have to worry. TRICARE for Life (TFL) is TRICARE's wraparound coverage for those who are also eligible for Medicare. Take the time to learn how you can take advantage of your health care entitlement.

What is TFL?

TFL acts as a secondary insurance to Medicare, minimizing your out-of-pocket costs. In other words, claims will go to Medicare first and then to TFL. If the service is covered by both Medicare and TRICARE, Medicare coverage will pay first and TFL will then pay any Medicare deductibles, Medicare cost-shares and Medicare copayments. You can view eligibility and cost information at www.tricare.mil/tfl.

What makes me eligible?

TFL is available to TRICARE beneficiaries 65 and older with a valid military ID card who are enrolled in both Medicare Parts A and B. Don't forget to confirm that your Medicare status is current in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). TFL is based on the family member that reaches 65 and, therefore, another

family member may still be using one of the other TRICARE programs if not yet eligible for TFL.

What are my Medicare enrollment deadlines?

Generally, you become eligible for Medicare at age 65. About 90 days prior to turning 65 you will receive mail from Social Security and Medicare advising you about your Medicare options. If you decline Medicare

What about claims?

Medicare is the primary claims processor for TFL beneficiaries, and TRICARE is secondary for both dual-eligible beneficiaries and TFL. This means claims will be sent to Medicare first, and TRICARE second. Additionally, Medicare supplemental programs are considered primary over TFL. Typically, if the only medical coverage involved is Medicare Part A and

TFL is available to TRICARE beneficiaries 65 and older with a valid military ID card who are enrolled in both Medicare Parts A and B.

Part B, your TRICARE benefits will end the day you would have become eligible for Medicare. If you accept Medicare Part B, your TRICARE benefits will continue in the form of TFL. In most cases, if you don't enroll in Part B during your initial eligibility period, you must wait until the next general enrollment period between January 1 and March 31 of the following year. If you enroll at that time, the Part B premiums may increase an additional 10 percent for each 12-month period you were eligible to enroll in Medicare, but did not.

B and TFL -- your provider will submit the claim to Medicare and Medicare will automatically send the claim to WPS, which manages the TFL program. You can reach WPS for questions about claims and customer assistance at 1-866-773-0404 or www.tricare4u.com.

Where can I find more information?

Check out these handy online resources for more information on TFL and Medicare:

- * www.medicare.gov for more information on Medicare premiums, enrollment deadlines and eligibility.
- * www.tricare.mil/tfl for initial details about TRICARE for Life, including the entitlement's key features.
- * www.triwest.com/beneficiary/default.aspx. Go to "update DEERS" to confirm that your Medicare status is current in the DEERS system, which you will need to do to determine eligibility for TFL.

Wisconsin Physicians Service (WPS) is the TRICARE for Life benefit administrator and you can reach them at 1-866-773-0404 and through their Web site at www.tricare4u.com.

Ombudsman Corner Family Preparedness Plan



We have all thought at one time or another that we need to be more prepared. Natural disasters all over the world remind us that anything can happen at any time. Whether the emergency is natural or otherwise, we can do more to prepare ourselves and our families. Here is a list of suggested actions from Operation Prepare (www.cnmc.navy.mil) that we can do to prepare for any type of emergency.

1. Be Informed
 - * What disasters are likely to happen in your area?
 - * What specific information do you need to know regarding these disasters? For example, know the evacuation routes
2. Make an Evacuation Plan
 - * Where will you go in an emergency?
 - * Where will children look for you if they are at school at the time of an emergency?
 - * Remember that phone lines and cell towers may be out of service during an emergency. How will you reach each other?
3. Make a Family Communications Plan
 - * Make a detailed plan of communication in the event you are separated during an emergency.
 - * Create an information card with all names, phone numbers, insurance data for each member of the family.
 - * Give a copy of the information card to your Ombudsman in a sealed envelope with your signature across the opening- to be opened only in an emergency.
 - * Establish and list an in-case-of-emergency or ICE person on all cell phones.
4. Practice Your Plan
 - * Going over evacuations and shelter-in-place drills will ensure everyone knows what to do when the time comes.
 - * Keep an emergency supply kit to last at least 3 days, keep it up to date, replace perishables periodically, make sure everyone knows where it is and to take it when sheltering or evacuating.
 - * Change smoke alarm batteries at both time changes (daylight savings) and check to ensure functionality.
5. After a Declared Emergency
 - * Register your needs with the Navy through the Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS) at https://www.navyfamily.navy.mil or call 1.877.414.5359 or 1.866.297.1971 (TDD)

6. Where to Find Additional Information
 - * American Red Cross- search for: www.redcross.org/services/prepare.html
 - * Department of Homeland Security- www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan/index.html
 - * FEMA- search for: www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/index.shtm

Resource of the Month:

www.lincolnmilitary.com 760.368.4500

- * Runs housing on base
- * Offers resources for families
- * Hosts activities and special events in housing areas
- * Visit your local housing office to see what Lincoln can do for you.
- * The main office is Bldg 1003 Cottontail Road, the first left past the Commissary, Home Store and Child Care Centers, first building on the right.
- * Call the housing office for comments/concerns. For serious concerns, contact your Ombudsman.

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ATLAS SELF STORAGE

DoD Launches New Video...

Continued from page 1

leaders discuss their own struggles in order to encourage others to seek help. "I don't walk up to somebody and say, --Hey, my name's Chief..., I sought help in the mental health system." It's not natural to do that. But when you see somebody struggling, and they give you this, ...Oh, you don't know what I'm going through." Then that's when you pull out that ace, and you say, ...Yes, I do know what you're going through," said Sarmina.

The video will be distributed to Family Readiness Group leaders, chaplains, military behavioral health clinicians, unit commanders, Reserve unit leaders, as well as other military groups who want to raise awareness and encourage help-seeking as an act of strength.

"Military families face unique challenges. The video is a vehicle to promote discussion about how others cope with these challenges. By hearing service members and their families speak honestly about their struggles and how awareness and treatment helped, we hope it will encourage others to get help," said Navy Captain Mark Paris, Ph.D., Deputy Director for Psychological Health Operations in the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Health Protection & Readiness).

A Different Kind of Courage runs approximately 25 minutes. To view a trailer or the full length version of the video, visit <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/military/>.

About the Mental Health Self-Assessment Program... (MHSAP)

MHSAP gives service personnel and their families the opportunity to learn more about mental health and alcohol use through anonymous self-assessments offered online, via telephone, and through special events held at installations. The program is designed to help individuals identify their own symptoms and access assistance before a problem becomes serious. The self-assessments address Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, generalized anxiety disorder, alcohol use, and bipolar disorder. After completing a self-assessment, individuals receive referral information including services provided through the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs. MHSAP is a program of the nonprofit Screening for Mental Health, Inc. and is fully funded by Force Health Protection and Readiness, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Affairs. To take a free, anonymous self-assessment, visit www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org or call 1-877-877-3647.

Children's Deployment Stress...

Continued from page 3

military families and children are experiencing.

For assistance finding a TRICARE behavioral health provider and making an appointment, call TriWest's Provider Locator and Appointment Assistance Services at 1-866-651-4970 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.).

For more information about your TRICARE behavioral health benefits, visit www.tricare.mil/mybenefit.

Online Resources to Help

There are several free, online resources for children of all ages to combat depression. These include:

Behavioral Health portal on

www.TriWest.com: This portal offers a Depression Screening Quiz, TRICARE provider locator, TRICARE benefits information and treatment options.

DeploymentKids.com: This site offers a variety of activities for children such as word games, jokes, online journals, fun quizzes and a "Where in the World" map to show where the parent is.

MilitaryOneSource.com: Find articles, booklets, audio CDs and other interactive tools to help you learn how to talk to your child about deployment.

Videos and DVD Programs
A variety of multi-media programs are also available for chil-

Diabetes Under Control...

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then your provider can help you with that as well. Always bring your record book to your provider visits so you can talk about reaching your glucose goals.

One of the tests that your provider will recommend is the A1C test. Remember, if you don't get this test done, not only are you risking your health, but Navy Medicine will cut the hospital funding, thereby effecting health care access for everyone. The A1C test shows the average amount of glucose in your blood during the past 2 to 3 months. You need to have this test done at least twice a year. Your A1C result plus your blood glucose meter results can show whether your blood glucose is under control. Aim for an A1C result below 7 percent. If your A1C test result is below 7 percent, then your blood glucose is in a desirable range and your diabetes treatment plan is working. The lower your A1C is, the lower your chance of having health problems.

The next step in controlling your diabetes is by controlling your blood pressure. Normal blood pressure will help prevent damage to your eyes, kidneys, heart, and blood vessels. Meal planning, medicines, and physical activity can help you reach your blood pressure target. The blood pressure goal for most people with diabetes is less than 130/80.

You need to keep your cholesterol levels low as well. Normal cholesterol and blood fat levels will help prevent heart disease and stroke, the biggest health problems for people with diabetes. Keeping cholesterol levels under control can also help with blood flow. Have your cholesterol levels checked at least once a year.

Another step that you can take to keeping your diabetes under control is to stop using tobacco. There is evidence that nicotine spikes your blood sugar levels and interferes with how your diabetes medications work. Ninety five percent of diabetics who suffer an amputation are tobacco users because of how tobacco use affects your blood flow to your extremities. If you quit tobacco, you'll

lower your risk for heart attack, stroke, nerve disease, and kidney disease. Your blood circulation, cholesterol and blood pressure levels may also improve.

Other steps you can take to prevent diabetes problems include: keeping your feet healthy by checking them each day. Also, your health care provider should do a complete foot exam at least once a year. Ask your health care team whether you should take a low-dose aspirin every day to lower your risk for heart disease. To keep your eyes healthy, visit an eye care professional once a year for a complete eye examination that includes using drops in your eyes to dilate the pupils. Make sure your doctor checks your urine for protein every year. At least once a year, your blood creatinine level should be checked.

Make sure you see the hospital dietitian for an eating plan and become more physically active. Follow the healthy eating plan that you and your doctor or dietitian have worked out. Be active a total of 30 minutes most days. Ask your doctor what activities are best for you. Take your medicines as directed. Brush and floss your teeth every day and see your dentist twice a year for a cleaning and checkup. Ask your health care provider about ways to handle stress as stress can both send your blood sugar levels up as well as make it more difficult to control your levels. Health promotion & wellness has a wealth of stress reduction materials that may help you deal with stress in healthier ways. Get a flu shot each year. Get a pneumonia shot if you're over 64 and your shot was more than 5 years ago.

You can prevent or slow down diabetes problems by reaching your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol goals most of the time. Taking care of diabetes is a team effort between you and your health care team-doctor, diabetes nurse educator, diabetes dietitian educator, pharmacist, and others. You are the most important member of the team. When you follow your provider's recommendations for diabetes control, it is a win/ win situation all around by keeping you healthier and by increasing hospital funding for all.

dren of different age ranges:

Help From Home: Syndicated columnist, radio host and author, Jacey Eckhart chats with military moms about raising children while their husbands were deployed. Also, teens around the U.S. discuss the challenges and rewards of being a military teen. This video series is available as streaming video or a two-DVD set on the Behavioral Health portal on www.TriWest.com.

Talk, Listen, Connect: Helping Families Cope With Military Deployment: Features the Sesame Street character Elmo dealing with the prolonged absence of his father. It is suitable for ages 3 to 5, and is available from Sesame Street Workshop at

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/tlc>.

Talk, Listen, Connect:
Deployment, Homecoming,

Changes: Another Sesame Street video that aims to aid children in understanding and

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Pacific Partnership 2008 USNS Mercy

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) James Seward
USNS Mercy Public Affairs

ABOARD USNS MERCY, At Sea -- The United States Public Health Service (USPHS) has embarked 50 of its officers aboard USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) in support of Pacific Partnership 2008. They provide unique medical, dental and civic capabilities to the multi-faceted humanitarian team.

The team of physicians, scientists, dentists, veterinarians, and preventive health specialists are ready to provide aid and specialized expertise throughout the entire mission.

"We have three teams of 15 officers that will play a significant role in every aspect of the mission," said Capt. Kevin Prohaska, officer in charge of Mercy's USPHS team. "We are thrilled to be a part of this team, and look forward to providing our services to make this mission a success."

The USPHS team plans to protect, promote and advance the health of the people of each host nation. While the team offers distinctive guidance and leadership aboard Mercy, they also plan to engage in the humanitarian efforts occurring on the ground.

"Right now our pharmacy team is ensuring all the medication is properly sorted and

labeled for potential patients in the Philippines," said Lt. Cmdr. Houda Mahayni, a USPHS pharmacist aboard Mercy. "Making sure patients get exactly what they need is very important to our mission."

While the USPHS is known for its active role in domestic public health, the service is no stranger to humanitarian missions like Pacific Partnership 2008.

The USPHS has been actively involved in past missions with the USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) and Pacific Partnership 2007.

"I consider myself very lucky to be a part of this team," said Mahayni. The opportunity to be a part of Pacific Partnership 2008 is why I serve."

Mercy's team of USPHS specialists is a part of the seven uniformed services which includes the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Air Force. The USPHS, comprised of 6,000 officers, are deployed with different health agencies around the world.

Pacific Partnership 2008 seeks to build upon relationships and goodwill established during Mercy's 2006 and USS Peleliu's (LHA 5) 2007 Pacific

Partnership missions. This mission seeks to demonstrate U.S. commitment and sustained desire to promote peace and stability in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia.

The USPHS, non-governmental organizations and a team of international partner military services, will provide an array of medical and civil aid to The Republic of the Philippines, Vietnam, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, and the Federated States of Micronesia.



U.S. Public Health Service's Cmdr. Houda Mahayni works in the pharmacy supply room aboard USNS Mercy (T-AH 19); ensuring medication is properly labeled and placed for patients during Pacific Partnership 2008. Pacific Partnership 2008 is a humanitarian mission providing medical and civic assistance to the Republic of the Philippines, Vietnam, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) James Seward.

Children's Deployment Stress...

Continued from page 3

unbundling the tangle of complex emotions many feel in the midst of a mother's or father's tours of duty away from home, and even broaches the difficult subject of dealing with a parent's debilitating war injury.

Mr. Poe and Friends Discuss Family Reunion After Deployment: Uses cartoon characters to address deployment issues affecting children ages 6 to 11. It is available at www.cs.amedd.army.mil/youth.aspx.

Military Youth Coping With Separation: When Family Members Deploy: A half-hour video featuring teenagers discussing their feelings and how they cope with issues that arise when a parent is deployed. It is available at www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment/videos.html

Bottom Line

Communicate with your children. Actively listen to their thoughts, fears and concerns. Answer their questions as honestly as you can. Encourage your children to express their feelings through artwork, poems and stories. Watch one of the videos listed above and use the accompanying parent discussion guide to stimulate conversation. Most importantly, be a role model by showing that caring for your mental health is as important as caring for your physical health.

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